

Why General Education and Special Education Collaboration Matters in Transition

Dr. Bill East, Executive Director
National Association of State Directors
of Special Education
bill.east@nasdse.org

Arizona's Eleventh Annual Transition Conference
October 3 - 4, 2011



Why is Transition Important to both General and Special Education?

The Challenge for the Nation



Three out of every ten students do not graduate from high school.

About half of those who graduate are not college- and work-ready.

Source: EPE 2007; Greene 2002



Each School Dropout Costs the Public \$209,000 Over a Lifetime

- \$139,100 in reduced tax payments
- \$40,500 in increased public health costs
- \$26,600 from increased criminal activity
- \$3,000 in increased welfare costs
- Source: NGA website – Dropout Prevention & Recovery
<http://www.nga.org/portal/site/nga/menuitem.1f41d49be2d3d33eacdcbeeb501010a0/?vgnextoid=d5d01140e1e2c110VgnVCM1000001a01010aRCRD>

Persistent Problems in Transition:

*Our Success Depends on Others...
Do Our Actions Show That We Understand That?*

Transition Issues:

- Cross stakeholder groups
- Cross Agencies
- Emerge across the lifespan
- **Focus on the same intended beneficiaries**

Do We :

- *Connect across stakeholders*
- *Connect across agencies*
- *Know what each other is aiming to do*
- *Understand why they are doing it*
- **Know how their work will address common problems**



Persistent Problems in Transition: *Can We Get Outside the Proverbial 'Box'?*

What Is Our 'Box'?

- Special education
- Secondary years
- Youth with disabilities
- Compliance

Can We Imagine :

- *'All education'* strategy
- Education across the grade span
- An *"all youth"* agenda
- Compliance with Quality



Where is the 'Smart Power'?: The Push or the Pull

To achieve what we have been unable to achieve...what might be more effective?

- *Rely on a "push strategy" for discrete transition initiatives based on mandates*
- *Create a 'pull' for our experience and knowledge to inform and support the 'big picture' of high school redesign*

The road to success goes through general education

- Can we discuss how transition 'fits' in school reform?
- Can we discuss how school reform advances transition?
- Does our transition expertise transfer to the pressing problems in today's schools?
- Do others recognize what we have to offer?

'Real' Opportunities for Understanding Are at the *Intersection* of Issues



Cross-walking High School Redesign and Transition

- Common goals
- Common strategies
- Common challenges
- Common stakeholders
- *Shared work????*

Sharing an Agenda Across Groups



Where are the "windows" on a shared agenda?

- What is the intersection of our interests?
- Why should others care about our success in our work?
- What work is underway separately?
- Where are the possibilities?
- What will we do together?
- What will we do in support of each other?
- How will we each inform and build support within our constituents?

A Quick Poll: To What Extent...

- Are transition personnel knowledgeable about P-16 : Cradle to College and Career ?
- Informed about the Common Core State Standards?
- Knowledgeable about the new assessments in the Common Core?
- Able to connect these initiatives to transition?

1. Not aware
2. Somewhat aware
3. Connect these in our work
4. Very knowledgeable... could help others learn

Elements for Successful Transition Programs

1. Work is grounded in overall school achievement goals



2. Shared stakeholder planning and implementation around common work that includes policymakers, implementers and consumers



3. Strong business/education partnerships



4. Opportunity for adult peer interaction and support



5. Leadership in every role



6. Qualified, motivated and supported stakeholders



7. Goals exceed seemingly possible results



8. Meaningful youth/young adult immersion in the entire Transition process



9. Transition initiative starts early and never ends



10. Goals based on student's strengths, needs and preferences, as well as interest areas.



11. Transition program has a "drop-in" initiative.



12. Good results at graduation and one-two years later



13. Annual conference to
spotlight/celebrate the work
and to plan follow-up
opportunities for next year



Resources - Websites

- NASDSE: www.nasdse.org
 - IDEA Partnership: www.ideapartnership.org
 - Shared Work: www.sharedwork.org
 - Project Forum: www.projectforum.org
- CSAVR: <http://www.rehabnetwork.org>
- National Center on Secondary Education and Transition (NCSET): <http://www.ncset.org/>
- National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities: <http://www.ndpc-sd.org>
- National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center: <http://www.nsttac.org>
- National Post-School Outcomes Center: <http://www.psocenter.org>

